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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Maine Judicial Branch Launches Referee Program to Tackle Family  
and Civil Case Backlog**

**March 22, 2022, Portland, Maine.** The Maine Judicial Branch announced today that it has started accepting certain family matters and non-jury civil cases into a new referee program with the aim of reducing the backlog of cases that has accumulated during the COVID-19 pandemic.

All referees appointed under this program will be paid by the court. The referee program will utilize the expertise of recently retired Judicial Branch judicial officers who will conduct settlement conferences and hearings, generally via the Zoom video platform. Initially, the program will prioritize family cases in which both sides have attorneys. The goal is to add capacity in the short-term to assist the Judicial Branch in addressing the backlog without adding work to existing Judicial Branch personnel.

More information on the program can be found in [Administrative Order JB-22-03 \(A. 3-22\)](#), available on the Judicial Branch's website.

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